

CLAIMS

1 1. A method in a computer system for providing computer equipment to a
2 customer, comprising:

3 receiving an indication of an available piece of the computer equipment;

4 updating a database to indicate a lease of the computer equipment to the
5 customer in return for a payment from the customer corresponding at least in part to a length
6 of time the customer leases the computer equipment;

7 receiving an indication from the customer that the lease is terminated after an
8 arbitrary, customer-selected time period has elapsed, without incurring a penalty to the
9 customer; and

10 updating the database to indicate that the computer equipment is received back
11 from the customer.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the customer is a first customer and the
2 payment is a first customer payment, and wherein the method further comprises updating the
3 database to indicate sale of the computer equipment to a second customer, or lease of the
4 computer equipment to the second customer by providing the computer equipment to the
5 second customer and receiving a second customer payment corresponding at least in part to
6 the length of time the second customer leases the computer equipment.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 indicating a commitment to leasing a selected number of computer components
3 from a component vendor;

4 updating the database to indicate leasing at least one of the computer
5 components from the vendor by receiving the computer component from the vendor and
6 paying the vendor at predetermined intervals a periodic vendor payment corresponding to the
7 cost of the computer component multiplied by an interest rate factor and divided by a total
8 number of predetermined intervals that elapse until the estimated value of the component is
9 zero; and

10 updating the database to indicate payment of the periodic vendor payment after
11 the total number of predetermined intervals has elapsed.

1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising updating the database to
2 indicate purchasing the component from the vendor and selling the computer equipment to
3 the other customer or leasing the computer equipment to another customer by providing the
4 computer equipment to the other customer and receiving payments from the other customer
5 while continuing to pay the vendor the periodic vendor payment.

1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 indicating leasing of at least one of the components of the computer equipment
3 from a vendor by receiving the component from the vendor and paying the vendor at
4 predetermined intervals a periodic vendor payment corresponding to the cost of the
5 component multiplied by an interest rate factor and divided by a number of time intervals
6 that elapse until an estimated value of the component is zero; and

7 indicating purchasing the computer component from the vendor for a purchase
8 amount after a selected number of time intervals have passed and after paying a selected
9 number of periodic vendor payments, the purchase amount corresponding to a remaining
10 value of the computer component.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 indicating leasing of at least one component of the computer equipment from
3 the vendor by receiving the component from the vendor and paying the vendor at
4 predetermined intervals a periodic vendor payment corresponding to the cost of the
5 component multiplied by an interest rate factor and divided by a number of time intervals
6 that elapse until the value of the component is zero; and

7 indicating continuing to lease the components and pay the vendor the periodic
8 vendor payment after the number of time intervals has passed.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein updating a database to indicate a lease
2 of the computer equipment includes indicating receipt from the customer of a plurality of
3 periodic payments having equal values.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein updating a database to indicate a lease
2 of the computer equipment includes indicating receipt from the customer a plurality of
3 periodic payments with each successive payment being less than the preceding payment.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 indicating refurbishing of the components of the computer equipment after
3 receiving the computer equipment back from the customer; and
4 indicating transmission of the computer equipment with the refurbished
5 components to another customer.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising indicating payment of an
2 interest fee for the computer components.

1 11. A method for providing computer equipment to a customer, comprising:
2 leasing at least one component of the computer equipment from a vendor by
3 receiving the component from the vendor and paying the vendor a periodic vendor payment;
4 installing the component in the computer equipment; and
5 leasing the computer equipment to a customer in return for payment from the
6 customer corresponding at least in part to the length of time the customer leases the computer
7 equipment.

1 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the customer is a first customer and the
2 payment is a first customer payment, and wherein the method further comprises selling the
3 computer equipment to a second customer, or leasing the computer equipment to the second
4 customer by providing the computer equipment to the second customer and receiving a
5 second customer payment corresponding at least in part to the length of time the second
6 customer leases the computer equipment.

1 13. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

2 receiving an indication from the customer that the computer equipment lease is
3 terminated after an arbitrary, customer-selected time period has elapsed, without incurring a
4 penalty to the customer; and

5 receiving the computer equipment back from the customer.

1 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

2 ceasing to receive payment from the customer upon termination of the
3 computer equipment lease; and

4 ceasing to pay the vendor for the computer component.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein installing the component in the
computer equipment includes installing the component in a personal computer, notebook
computer or server.

16. A method in a computer system for providing computer equipment to a
customer, comprising:

1 updating a database to indicate that at least one component of the computer
2 equipment is leased from a vendor, the lease including receiving the component from the
3 vendor and paying the vendor a periodic vendor payment;

4 receiving an indication that the component is installed in the computer
5 equipment;

6 updating a database to indicate that the computer equipment is leased to a
7 customer in return for a payment from the customer corresponding at least in part to a length
8 of time the customer leases the computer equipment; and

9 updating a database to indicate that the computer equipment is received back
10 from the customer and the lease with the customer is terminated after an arbitrary, customer-
11 selected period of time has elapsed without penalty to the customer.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising updating a database to
indicate continued payments to the vendor for the component after having paid the vendor a

3 total amount for the component that is at least equal to an initial value of the component,
4 while leasing the computer equipment to the customer or another customer.

1 18. The method of claim 16 wherein the customer is a first customer and the
2 payment is a first customer payment, and wherein the method further comprises updating a
3 database to indicate a sale of the computer equipment to a second customer, or a lease of the
4 computer equipment to the second customer by providing the computer equipment to the
5 second customer and receiving a second customer payment corresponding at least in part to
6 the length of time the second customer leases the computer equipment.

1 19. A method for providing computer equipment to customers, comprising:
2 leasing at least one component of the computer equipment from a vendor by
3 receiving the component from the vendor and paying the vendor a periodic vendor payment;
4 installing the component into the computer equipment;
5 leasing the computer equipment to a first customer by providing the computer
6 equipment to the first customer and receiving a first customer payment corresponding at least
7 in part to a length of time the computer equipment is leased by the first customer;
8 receiving the computer equipment back from the first customer after an
9 arbitrary customer-selected period of time has elapsed without penalty to the customer;
10 ceasing to receive the first customer payment;
11 purchasing the component from the vendor;
12 selling the computer equipment to a second customer, or leasing the computer
13 equipment to the second customer by providing the computer equipment to the second
14 customer and receiving a second customer payment corresponding to a length of time the
15 computer equipment is leased by the second customer while continuing to pay the vendor the
16 periodic vendor payment.

1 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the component is a component of a
2 personal computer and installing the component includes installing the component in a
3 personal computer, notebook computer or server.

1 21. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

2 ceasing to pay the vendor the periodic vendor payment for the computer

3 component during a period when the computer equipment is not leased or sold to a customer.

1 22. A method for obtaining computer equipment, comprising:

2 leasing the computer equipment from a leasing entity by receiving the

3 computer equipment from the entity and paying to the entity at least one periodic payment

4 corresponding at least in part to a length of time the computer equipment is leased from the

5 entity; and

6 returning the computer equipment to the entity without penalty after an

7 arbitrary period of time has elapsed.

1 23. The method of claim 22 wherein leasing the computer equipment from

2 the leasing entity includes paying the entity a plurality of periodic payments having equal

3 values.

1 24. The method of claim 22 wherein leasing the computer equipment from

2 the entity includes paying the entity a plurality of periodic payments with each successive

3 payment being less than the preceding payment.

1 25. The method of claim 22 wherein leasing the computer equipment

2 includes leasing a personal computer, notebook computer or server.

1 26. The method of claim 22, further comprising paying the periodic

2 payment before the start of the period for which the computer equipment is leased.

1 27. A method in a computer system for providing computer components to a

2 component assembler, comprising:

3 updating a database to indicate receiving from the assembler a commitment to

4 lease at least a selected number of computer components;

5 updating a database to indicate leasing each computer component to the
6 assembler, the leasing including providing the computer components to the assembler and
7 receiving a plurality of periodic payments from the assembler; and

8 indicating continued periodic payments from the assembler for at least one of
9 the components after having received total payments from the vendor for the computer
10 component at least equal to an initial value of at least one computer component.

1 28. The method of claim 27, further comprising indicating ceasing to
2 receive periodic payments from the assembler while a piece of computer equipment in which
3 the at least one component is installed and is not leased or sold to a customer of the
4 assembler.

1 29. The method of claim 27 wherein indicating continued periodic payments
2 from the assembler includes indicating periodic payments received while a piece of the
3 computer equipment in which the at least one component is installed is leased to a customer
4 of the assembler.

1 30. A computer-readable medium, the contents of which perform a method
2 for tracking computer leasing information, the method comprising:

3 tracking an identity of a piece of computer equipment;

4 tracking lease payments made by a customer leasing the piece of computer
5 equipment;

6 receiving an indication that the customer has terminated the lease of the
7 computer equipment at an arbitrary, customer-selected point in time; and

8 ceasing to track lease payments made by the customer without incurring
9 penalty to the customer for terminating the lease at the arbitrary, customer-selected point in
10 time.

1 31. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein the method further
2 comprises:

3 tracking an identity of a component of the computer equipment leased from a
4 component vendor; and

5 tracking lease payments made to the component vendor.

1 32. A computer system for tracking computer leasing information,
2 comprising:

3 an identity tracker capable of tracking an identity of a piece of computer
4 equipment;

5 a lease payment tracker capable of tracking lease payments made by a customer
6 leasing the piece of computer equipment; and

7 a termination tracker capable of receiving an indication that the customer has
8 terminated the lease of the computer equipment at an arbitrary customer-selected point in
9 time without incurring a penalty to the customer for terminating the lease at the customer-
10 selected point in time.

2 33. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the identity tracker is a first
3 identity tracker and the lease payment tracker is a first lease payment tracker, and wherein
4 the system further comprises:

5 a second identity tracker capable of tracking an identity of a component of the
6 piece of computer equipment leased from a component vendor; and

7 a second lease payment tracker capable of tracking lease payments made to a
8 component vendor for the component of the piece of computer equipment.